

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method of managing rental equipment, comprising the steps of:

storing a rental list of a plurality of rental equipment items removed by a customer from one of a plurality of second secure areas connected to a first secure area, the one second secure area being assigned to the customer;

after the rental list has been stored, sensing the identity of a the customer in proximity to the first secure area;

using a computer to selectively provide providing the customer access to a the first secure area based upon the sensed identity of the customer, the first secure area being connected to a plurality of second secure areas, one of which is assigned to the customer;

using a computer to selectively provide providing the customer access to return a piece of rental equipment to the second secure area assigned to the customer based upon the sensed identity of the customer;

after the customer is provided access to the second secure area, automatically generating a return list of rental equipment items returned to the second secure area by the customer;

determining at least one missing rental equipment item listed on the rental list and not listed on the return list; and

storing a designation of the at least one missing rental equipment item together with an identifier of the customer.

~~automatically sensing status information about the customer's use of the piece of rental equipment from the piece of rental equipment when it is returned to the second secure area; and~~

~~billing the customer for use of the piece of rental equipment based on the status information sensed from the piece of rental equipment.~~

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further including the step of: securing the plurality of rental equipment items from the rental list in the second secure area assigned to the customer based on a reservation received from the customer. ~~recording what the customer returns to the second secure area in an automated manner.~~

3-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including the steps of: starting a recording device when the identity of the customer is sensed; and stopping the recording device after a predetermined amount of time has passed.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the recording device includes one or more security cameras.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further including the step of:  
permitting the customer to remove the plurality of rental piece of equipment  
items from the first secure area.

8. (Currently amended) A method of managing rental equipment, comprising  
the steps of:

generating a rental list of a plurality of rental equipment items based on a  
reservation received from a customer;

after the rental list has been generated, sensing the identity of a the customer  
at a secure area assigned to the customer;

using a computer to selectively provide providing the customer access to a the  
secure area based upon the sensed identity, ~~the secure area including a piece of~~  
~~equipment to be rented by the customer;~~

using a computer to sense sensing an identifier on the each piece of equipment  
~~and starting status information related to operation of the piece of equipment as the~~  
~~equipment is moved within a predetermined distance from an exit of into the secure~~  
area;

automatically generating a return list of each piece of equipment sensed being  
moved into the secure area;

determining at least one missing rental equipment item listed on the rental list  
but not listed on the return list; and

~~allowing alerting the customer to remove~~ return the piece of ~~missing rental~~  
equipment item to ~~from~~ the secure area.[:]]

~~using a computer to sense return status information from the piece of~~  
~~equipment when the customer returns the piece of equipment to the secure area; and~~  
~~billing the customer for use of the piece of equipment based on the starting~~  
~~status information and the return status information.~~

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, further including the step  
of:

allowing the customer to ~~remove the piece of~~ move the equipment ~~from to~~ the  
secure area when the identity of the customer corresponds to the identifier on the piece  
of equipment.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 9, further including the step  
of:

automatically recording the ~~starting status information and what~~ when the  
customer ~~removes from~~ moves the equipment to the secure area.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9, further including the steps of:  
starting a recording device when the identity of the customer is sensed; and  
stopping the recording device after a predetermined amount of time has passed.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the recording device includes one or more security cameras.

13. (Currently amended) A method of managing rental equipment, comprising the steps of:

storing a rental list of a plurality of rental equipment items removed from one of a plurality of secure areas, the one secure area being assigned to a customer;

after the rental list has been stored, sensing the identity of a ~~the~~ customer;

using a computer to selectively provide ~~providing~~ the customer access to one of a plurality of secure areas based upon the sensed identity, the one secure area being assigned to the customer, based on the sensed identity;

allowing the customer to return a piece of equipment to the one secure area;

automatically generating a return list of equipment returned to the one secure area by the customer;

determining at least one missing rental equipment item listed on the rental list but not listed on the return list; and

automatically sensing status information about maintenance needed by the returned piece of equipment; and

billing the customer for costs associated with the missing rental equipment item-  
~~maintenance needed by the returned piece of equipment.~~

14. (Currently amended) The method of claim 13, further including the step of:

automatically recording ~~what a~~ status of the equipment the customer returns to the one secure area.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the customer identity indicates that the customer is a member of an approved group of renters and wherein the one secure area includes equipment available to the approved group of renters.

16. (Currently amended) A system for managing rental equipment, comprising:

a first secure area;

a plurality of second secure areas accessible from the first secure area, one of which is assigned to a customer;

a rental component that generates a rental list of a plurality of rental equipment items removed from the second secure area assigned to the customer;

an access controller that selectively allows the customer to access the second secure area assigned to the customer; and

a return component that generates a return list of rental equipment items returned to the second secure area by the customer and determines at least one missing rental equipment item listed on the rental list but not listed on the return list; and

~~a status sensor that senses status information about operation of a piece of equipment after the customer accesses the second secure area; and~~

an invoice component that bills the customer for ~~operation of the piece of a cost~~  
associated with the missing rental equipment item based on the sensed status-  
information.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, further including a sensor that records  
a piece of equipment removed from the second secure area.

18. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein the sensor includes at least  
one of: radio frequency identification tag reader and bar code reader.

19. (Currently amended) The system of claim 17, wherein the sensor  
includes a ~~GPS-based~~ GPS sensor.

20. (Currently amended) The system of claim 16, ~~further including wherein~~  
the return component further comprises a sensor that records a piece of equipment  
returned to the second secure area.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the sensor includes at least  
one of: radio frequency identification tag reader and bar code reader.

22. (Currently amended) The system of claim 20, wherein the sensor  
includes a ~~GPS-based~~ GPS sensor.

23-28. (Cancelled).

29. (Currently amended) A system for providing goods to a customer, comprising:

a first secure area;

a plurality of second secure areas accessible from the first secure area, one of which is assigned to a customer;

an access controller that selectively allows the customer to return rental equipment to the second secure area assigned to the customer;

a ~~sensor-partial return component~~ that detects ~~maintenance needed by a~~ missing piece of rental equipment previously rented by the customer but not among the rental equipment returned by the customer to the second secure area; and

an invoice component that automatically bills the customer for costs associated with the ~~missing maintenance needed by the returned piece of~~ rental equipment.

30. (Currently amended) The system of claim 29, further including a sensor that records goods ~~removed from~~ returned to the second secure area.



31. (Currently amended) A method of managing rental equipment, comprising the steps of:

sensing the identity of a customer;

~~using a computer to selectively provide~~ providing the customer access to a secure area based upon the sensed identity, the secure area uniquely associated with the customer;

~~sensing an identifier on a piece~~ a plurality of pieces of equipment and status information related to the customer's use of the ~~piece of equipment as the piece of~~ equipment is moved within a predetermined distance from an entrance of the secure area; ~~and~~

determining a missing rental equipment item previously removed from the secure area by the customer but not among the plurality of pieces of equipment moved within the predetermined distance from the entrance of the secure area; and

automatically billing the customer for use of the missing rental equipment item ~~piece of equipment in an amount based on the sensed status information.~~

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, further including the step of:  
automatically recording what the customer returns to the secure area.

33-34. (Cancelled.)